

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<http://oversight.house.gov>

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)

Subcommittee on Government Operations

Hearing on "18F and U.S. Digital Service Oversight"

June 10, 2016

Thank you, Chairman Meadows, Chairman Hurd and Ranking Member Kelly. This hearing is exactly the type of oversight that we can agree, on a bipartisan basis, is needed.

Today's hearing will give us the opportunity to hear from the Administration about two programs that are playing a central role in the Administration's efforts to modernize and improve federal IT.

The federal government spent approximately \$80 billion on IT in 2015. Mr. Powner, you testified before the full Committee just two weeks ago that agencies are spending most of that money on outdated, legacy IT systems. GAO's high-risk list includes management of IT acquisitions and operations.

Agencies need to modernize their systems and their way of thinking about IT investments. The creation of the U.S. Digital Service and 18F in 2014 brought a critical focus to these issues.

In 2014, Congress passed the bipartisan Federal Information Technology Acquisition and Reform Act, better known as FITARA, authored by myself and Representative Darrell Issa. One of the most important changes made by FITARA was to provide agency CIOs the authority to make spending decisions related to IT. The law also requires CIOs to certify progress on IT investments.

Congress gave CIOs that authority and responsibility for a reason. It is imperative that 18F and the Digital Service coordinate with CIOs to ensure that the agencies have a sense of accountability for their investment decisions but also to ensure agencies adopt and institutionalize the best practices these programs are sharing.

There are many success stories over the last 2 years that we look forward to Ms. Chrousos and Mr. Dickerson highlighting in their testimony. It was refreshing to see that the GAO found overwhelmingly positive customer satisfaction with both 18F and the Digital Service.

I am proud to cosponsor of the Information Technology Modernization Act which would create a revolving fund for updating outdated IT systems. Under that bill, 18F would use its expertise to ensure that agencies use best practices such as agile development. As Mr. Powner will testify, there are some areas where both 18F and the U.S. Digital Service can improve their communication, transparency, coordination, and outreach.

GAO found in its recent review of these programs, that the U.S. Digital Service and agencies could do a better job of incorporating the agency Chief Information Officer into the work of the Digital Service teams.

We are interested in hearing from the witnesses today how 18F and the Digital Service can improve communication with stakeholders and work with the private sector to ensure the work of these programs is transparent and that the federal IT portfolio is as effective and efficient as it can be.

I appreciate the commitment the employees of 18F and the Digital Service have made to serve their government. They are bringing the lessons they have learned from the companies and organizations they come from to improve federal IT. Just as technology has led to private sector job growth it also can inspire federal government recruitment of the best and the brightest.

Thank you to all of the witnesses for your willingness to be here this morning. I look forward to your testimony.

Contact: Jennifer Werner, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181